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New York

President: Mr. Ashe ..... (Antigua and Barbuda)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda items 30 and 112

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/68/729)

Report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722)

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): This is an important day at the United Nations as we consider a report submitted by the Secretariat on the work of the Peacebuilding Commission, which is approaching its tenth anniversary. It provides the Assembly with the opportunity to contribute new ideas and fresh visions, to address its experience with the work of the Commission to date, and to make recommendations for the future.

I give the floor to the representative of Croatia, former Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): On behalf of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), I am pleased to present the report of the Commission on its seventh session, as contained in document A/68/729. The report presents the progress made in taking forward the recommendations of the 2010 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture and is organized around the Commission's three main functions, namely, advocacy and sustaining attention; resource mobilization; and forging coherence.

Allow me to highlight a number of issues from the report that deserve the particular attention of the General Assembly.

First, and given its unique compositional structure, the Commission must capitalize on the wealth of experience and diverse capacities that its membership can offer in support of peacekeeping objectives for the countries on its agenda. This was a key conclusion of the 2010 review. During the reporting period, additional emphasis was placed on increasingly engaging members from the region and subregion in supporting the peacebuilding processes in the countries concerned. The turn of events in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic over the past year, as well as the increasing focus of the African Union on its new African solidarity initiative on producing African solutions to Africa's problems, has confirmed that the PBC will gain greater credibility and effectiveness if its African members are fully engaged and supportive of the broader peacebuilding objectives being pursued by the Commission.

Secondly, the Commission continues to recognize that its membership structure should also reinforce the scope and modality of its advisory role to the principal organs of the United Nations. The process of enhancing ownership and collective responsibility among its members should be manifested first and foremost in championing concrete, practical steps to bring key peacebuilding-related opportunities and challenges to the attention of the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. I am pleased to note that the reporting period

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witnessed significant progress in quantifying the scope and identifying practical modalities regarding the Commission's advisory role to the Security Council. At the same time, efforts aimed at achieving similar progress in relation to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council must be further intensified.

Thirdly, the Commission has embarked on an ambitious programme of work focused on delivering its three core functions to the engagement with Burundi, the Central African Republic, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Through its country-specific engagement, the Commission is constantly reminded that peacebuilding is not a linear process but rather one fraught with challenges that are typically context-specific and take various forms at different stages of the peacebuilding efforts. I would like to highlight the following points relating to the Commission's three functions.

First, the Commission's country-specific engagement over the past year confirmed that the advocacy and accompaniment function of the PBC depends above all on the level of commitment demonstrated by national interlocutors and on the quality of the international response in support of such commitment. The Commission therefore promotes an approach of mutual accountability and commitment in its support for the peacebuilding processes in the countries on its agenda. Examples in that regard, from Burundi to Liberia, are presented in greater detail in the report before the Assembly.

Secondly, the PBC is undertaking its resource mobilization function against the backdrop of the realization that it is not a fund-raising mechanism. That is a statement based on lessons learned over eight years of operation. Instead, and as an intergovernmental body, the PBC is best suited to helping countries develop and roll out national resource mobilization strategies for peacebuilding-related activities and programmes. The Commission has also projected itself as a platform for advocating for the timely deployment of targeted resources, especially in crisis situations such as in the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau, or as countries approach critical milestones such as the elections that took place in Guinea last year. Our enhanced synergy with the Peacebuilding Fund has made such timely interventions possible.

Thirdly, addressing the challenge of competing agendas and the fragmentation of peacebuilding activities remains a central objective for the Commission. However, the PBC's function in forging coherence is being undertaken by promoting a greater focus on opportunities for peacebuilding by pointing to strategic gaps in response to peacebuilding priorities and by drawing the attention of key stakeholders, especially regional and subregional actors, to bottlenecks in peacebuilding processes. The complementarity between the roles of the Commission and the senior leadership of the United Nations is a key factor in fostering coherence in messages and actions. That was increasingly apparent last year in the Commission's engagement in Burundi, the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau.

The transition from the security- and politically focused United Nations missions to the more development-oriented United Nations country teams is a process that highlights the interlinkage between the PBC's three core functions. In 2013 the Commission positioned itself to support the drawdown of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL) to a United Nations country team. In parallel with this plenary meeting, the Security Council is finalizing the decision on the closing of UNIPSIL, thus ushering Sierra Leone into a new phase of its transformation to a focus on social and economic development. This year the Commission will engage in support of another planned transition, that of the United Nations Office in Burundi. The Working Group on Lessons Learned will be dedicating its work in 2014 to identifying areas where the PBC's three functions can be strategically and effectively deployed in support of this and future transitions in countries on its agenda.

Recognizing the important contribution of women to peacebuilding, the Commission approached its thematic focus on economic revitalization and national reconciliation during the reporting period by examining the gender dimensions of both themes. A partnership with UN-Women has enabled the Commission to explore, raise awareness and draw lessons from the transformative role of women in post-conflict societies. A high-level event on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding was convened last September and chaired by the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of Croatia. The event resulted in a political declaration that affirmed the Commission members' commitment to women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding. A meeting in December of the Working Group on Lessons Learned also reaffirmed the importance of

gender mainstreaming in planning, setting priorities, and designing and delivering national reconciliation processes.

The Commission will convene its first ever national substantive session on 23 June in order to enable closer interaction and engagement among the relevant stakeholders in New York and on the ground, as well as from the capitals of Member States. The holding of the annual session can potentially strengthen the Commission's contribution to the development of intergovernmental policy and political support in areas that can improve outcomes for people in countries emerging from conflict. In addition, the next reporting period from 1 January to 31 December 2014 will mark the end of the second five-year review cycle for the peacebuilding architecture.

As mandated by the General Assembly and the Security Council, a further comprehensive review in 2015 will be initiated by both organs. The 2015 review is expected to assess progress made in the implementation of key recommendations emanating from the 2010 review and to take stock of remaining challenges. The Commission will initiate and advance informal preparation in which it will also identify areas of institutional and policy reforms that can be readily put into practice through its country-specific engagement ahead of the 2015 review.

Finally, I wish to acknowledge the role of the Peacebuilding Support Office and that of Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins and her team in support of the Commission's work and activities. The office is increasingly drawing on and channelling the expertise and knowledge within and outside the United Nations system in support of the PBC's policy and country-specific activities. I would personally like to thank them warmly for all their assistance throughout my chairmanship last year.

In conclusion, I must emphasize that the past year witnessed a number of positive but also some worrying developments, which can both call for further intensifying efforts to seize opportunities and address threats to sustaining peace. While we continue to face systematic challenges, we must commit ourselves to facing them with the requisite resolve and determination. We are approaching a crucial year in 2015, when we can collectively help shape the future socioeconomic and peacebuilding agenda of the United Nations. These efforts must come together and must be mutually reinforcing.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Patriota (Brazil): I am very pleased to follow Ambassador Drobnjak's statement.

Today's debate represents an annual opportunity for the wider membership of the United Nations to reflect on an increasingly significant aspect of the United Nations response to post-conflict challenges. The plight of millions of people living in countries emerging from conflict continues long after the guns have been silenced and a semblance of peace prevails. The path to healing the scars caused by war and the rebuilding of institutions that deliver security, justice, basic services and economic opportunity and that protect fundamental rights is long and fraught with enormous challenges.

The international community continues to struggle to help the countries emerging from conflict to meet those challenges. That has been partly caused by our inability to sustain attention and focus on the needs and priorities of those countries for as long as they deserved in order to prevent relapse into conflict and to avoid protracted instability. It could also be partly due to a fundamental difficulty in addressing or providing an adequate response to the deep sociological and psychological divides that tend to survive or even grow beneath the surface of peace agreements, power-sharing arrangements or institutional reform processes, if left unattended. As we have witnessed in various situations, the importance of conflict prevention, long-term engagement and due consideration of the root causes of conflicts cannot be overemphasized.

In a briefing to the Security Council on post-conflict peacebuilding last week (see S/PV.7143), I noted that the recent crises in the Central African Republic and South Sudan remind us that the nature of peacebuilding requires careful examination of strategies that tend to see stabilization as a sequence of different stages or priorities, rather than as an integrated, multidimensional process. Post-conflict response is often best served by strategies that approach security, political and socioeconomic dimensions simultaneously.

Through the work undertaken by the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Fund in the countries concerned, the synergy and complementarity between the political and programmatic dimensions of peacebuilding are distinct features of the United Nations

peacebuilding architecture. That key interaction has been demonstrated by the recent activities of the Central African Republic configuration, following the Chair's visit to the country earlier this month, and by the contribution of the Peacebuilding Fund to a spectrum of important stabilization activities, which is commendable for showing that peacebuilding efforts can begin at the very outset of the search for peace and stability.

Another distinct feature of that architecture is its continuous outreach on behalf of the United Nations to key and relevant regional and international partners, whose engagement and commitment is critical. The Commission and the Fund can keep us focused on and committed to ensuring that opportunities for building and sustaining peace are seized and nurtured and that risks and bottlenecks that undermine peace are addressed and overcome in a timely and comprehensive manner.

As reflected in the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its seventh session (A/68/729), the Commission has increasingly demonstrated added value in certain contexts and in specific areas of its core functions. However, the process of fine-tuning and sharpening the PBC's approach and tools and of adapting them to changing circumstances and specific needs is very much a work in progress.

The composition and intergovernmental character of the PBC provide it with the authority and legitimacy to articulate strategic guidance, forge greater coherence and strengthen national and regional ownership of peacebuilding efforts. As a diplomatic platform that is mandated to advise the General Assembly and the Security Council and that brings together key regional and global actors, the PBC is uniquely placed to promote greater harmony between the subregional, regional and international dimensions of post-conflict response.

Therefore, one of the Commission's key priority areas this year is to make the most of the engagement of its African members and to establish deep and dynamic partnerships with Africa's regional and subregional organizations. African regional and subregional organizations are displaying an unprecedented level of coordination, political will and ability to promote regional solutions. We need to work with the Group of African States and the members of the newly established African caucus of the PBC so as together to define how regional and subregional perspectives can be further integrated into the work of the PBC and the United Nations more broadly.

The PBC launched its thematic and normative work in 2013 by focusing on women's economic empowerment for peacebuilding and gender-responsive national reconciliation. The PBC has placed emphasis on the transformative role of women in post-conflict societies and on the need to continue to accord the requisite attention and priority to women's roles and participation in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

As noted by my predecessor , the Ambassador of Croatia, in his presentation of the PBC's report on its seventh session, the Commission will be convening its first-ever annual substantive session on 23 June 2014. The annual session this year will become a standing occasion for examining peacebuilding-related themes and areas where intergovernmental policy and commitment could contribute to more timely, sustained and effective responses to the needs of people in countries emerging from conflict.

The first annual session will particularly address the national and international aspects of sustainable resources and capacities for peacebuilding. As a core function of the PBC, the discussion of the financial and human capacity dimensions of resource mobilization assumes particular significance. It will relate to efforts aimed at strengthening national ownership and ensuring sustainable support to improve the lives of affected populations, including in the context of the transition of United Nations missions. The PBC is keen to engage a wide segment of stakeholders and actors from within and outside the United Nations in the substantive discussions of this theme. In keeping with its advisory function to this organ, the PBC is looking forward to sharing the key findings and recommendations of the annual session with the General Assembly.

Finally, the upcoming 10-year review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture offers an excellent opportunity for the wider membership to renew its commitments to the original vision and purpose of the PBC. We need to make the most of the opportunity offered by the review to identify areas and approaches where the PBC can practically demonstrate its continuing relevance to United Nations and global efforts aimed at sustaining peace and development.

As I underscored before the Security Council last week, the Commission can further evolve into a valuable intergovernmental instrument for building

and sustaining peace and for confronting the threats that undermine peace in a timely and comprehensive manner. I am convinced that, to that end, our efforts in the United Nations should remain people-centred, not only in terms of supporting programmes and projects that seek to promote concrete improvements in the lives of the people facing the daunting challenges of emergency and instability, but also by actively hearing their voices, learning from their narratives and allowing their experience to become the very material for sustainable recovery.

I believe that in 2014, the Peacebuilding Commission can be the locus for strengthening such a learning exercise and for embarking on an enriched dialogue among partners rather than between providers and beneficiaries.

Mr. Khiari (Tunisia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) in today's joint debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its seventh session (A/68/729) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722).

I would like at the outset to thank the President for organizing today's meeting. I also thank Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for the quality of his statement. Allow me also to extend my sincere thanks to Ambassador Ranko Vilović, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations, for his dedication and commitment to the work of the Commission during its seventh session. In addition, the Movement highly commends the election of Morocco as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration.

The establishment of the PBC provides us with a coordinated, coherent and integrated institutional mechanism for addressing the special needs of countries emerging from conflict as they move towards recovery, reintegration and reconstruction. The mechanism is triggered at a country's request in accordance with the principle of national ownership so that the foundation for sustainable development may be laid. Moving forward as it fulfils its objectives, the Movement supports the focus of the Commission on the following points.

With regard to relations with the principal organs of the United Nations, the Movement urges the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council to use the PBC's expertise by inviting it to participate in discussions on all issues of relevance to, or falling within, the Commission's competence. In that regard, NAM recalls the presidential statement on post-conflict peacebuilding (S/PRST/2012/29), which reiterated the principles of national ownership and inclusivity and highlighted the important role of the PBC in advancing and supporting an integrated and coherent approach to peacebuilding.

NAM also welcomes the Security Council's unanimous adoption of resolution 2086 (2013), which highlights the continued willingness of the Security Council to make use of the advisory, advocacy and resource mobilization roles of the PBC in peacebuilding activities as well as the need to harness those roles in advancing a coherent approach to multidimensional peacekeeping mandates in countries on its agenda. In the same context, we stress the importance of ensuring an early assessment of peacebuilding challenges in multidimensional peacekeeping so as to ensure better coordination and prioritization of peacebuilding and peacekeeping activities in mission mandates.

Furthermore, the Movement stresses the necessity to promote the institutional relations between the PBC and the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Without prejudice to the functions and powers of the other principal organs of the United Nations in relation to post-conflict peacebuilding, the General Assembly must play a key role in the formulation and the implementation of post-conflict peacebuilding activities. We also underline the central role of the PBC in the formulation and implementation of such activities and functions.

With respect to marshalling resources, we reiterate the necessity to provide required and timely resources in order to help to ensure predictable financing for recovery activities and sustained financial investment over the medium to long term. We also stress the necessity of ensuring the sustainability of funding for the countries on the agenda of PBC. In that respect, we are concerned by the lack of coordination and coherence among financial donors resulting in duplication and redundancy in particular areas and the neglect of other catalytic projects. Therefore, we call for setting up a mechanism within the PBC to review within each country configuration ways and means to ensure unity of efforts by donors in close collaboration with host countries.

With regard to the work of the country-specific configurations, the Movement acknowledges the

Commission's progress in terms of strategic frameworks for peacebuilding since it started its operations in the six countries on its agenda, namely, Burundi, Sierra Leone, Guinea-Bissau, the Central African Republic, Guinea and Liberia.

The Movement reiterates the fundamental role of the PBC in the conception of integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, with the consent of the countries under consideration and in conformity with the principle of national ownership. In that respect, we consider that additional efforts should be deployed to operationalize the principle of national ownership through the adoption of a demand-driven approach based on joint assessments with host countries. Furthermore, we stress the importance of ensuring that the country-specific configurations of the PBC develop effective and cooperative mechanisms based on sustained dialogue with the host countries under review.

With regard to the working methods of the PBC, the Movement reaffirms the work of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission as the central organ of the Commission, with responsibilities as described in resolution 60/180, and considers the Organizational Committee to be a suitable platform for strategy and policy discussions to promote the rules and working methods of the Commission.

On the specific issue of the conduct of PBC meetings, the notion that "a new level of attention and resolve on the part of Member States and the top echelons of the Secretariat is required", as concluded in the 2010 review of the peacebuilding architecture (A/64/868, annex), hardly needs reiteration. The Movement underlines the importance of building on the initiatives of Bangladesh and Croatia of holding high level meetings of the PBC, in September 2012 and September 2013, respectively.

In that regard, the Movement welcomes the decision to hold the first annual session of the Commission on 23 June, in connection with the annual stakeholders meeting of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and commends Indonesia for steering the discussions on its modalities. In that context, we underline the importance of institutionalizing the annual session of the PBC, with the aim of reinforcing the coherence and relevance of its work, offering a forum for engaging substantive discussions on its selected theme and guiding the PBC policy orientation.

Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund, we thank the Member States that have made contributions to the Fund. We also reiterate the importance of increasing the funding target of the PBF, to give it greater capacity to finance additional projects in post-conflict countries.

The PBF must continue to be geared towards providing critical support during the early stages of the peacebuilding process to avert relapse into conflict. There is also an urgent need for closer synergy in the strategic relationship between the PBC and the PBF in order to ensure greater coherence and coordination between the two organs and avoid duplication. In that regard, we note the recommendations and the revised terms of reference of the Peacebuilding Fund, as contained in resolution 63/282 and its annex. We reaffirm the roles of the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission in providing policy guidance on the use of the Fund, in order to maximize its impact in the field and improve its functioning — that is, to make the Fund more efficient, transparent, flexible and to facilitate the disbursement of funds, particularly for quick-impact and emergency projects. We also stress the necessity of having a mechanism to assess whether allocations from the PBF are directed to the appropriate channels for peacebuilding.

Finally, let me conclude by reiterating the Movement's assurance that it will continue its constructive and beneficial engagement in all future peacebuilding activities.

Mr. Dugan (United States of America): The United States actively supports the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) as important instruments to assist countries making the fragile transition from conflict to sustainable peace. The United Nations peacebuilding architecture helps to keep attention focused on countries emerging from conflict, develop more effective strategies to build peace, and mobilize necessary resources to prevent relapse into conflict.

Effective peacebuilding should be a strategic imperative for the United Nations as the ultimate goal of enduring peace should guide the many entities of the United Nations and Member States in mobilizing the necessary tools, instruments and strategies to support countries making the difficult transition out of conflict. Therefore, the United States has supported the ambitions of the PBC and PBF, which align with many of the United

States priorities in global cooperation, leading and supporting whole-of-Government solutions, investing in the building blocks of stronger societies, preventing and responding to crises and conflict, and building operational and resource platforms for success.

The activities of 2013 underscore the potential of the Peacebuilding Commission as a strategic platform that brings together specific countries on its agenda and relevant international stakeholders, with a view to stabilizing post-conflict situations so as to prevent relapse into conflict. The PBC in 2013 helped to identify and resolve sticking points and to ensure that available resources were better utilized so as to help close the gap between immediate post-conflict efforts, on the one hand, and long-term recovery and development efforts, on the other.

The United States delegation acknowledges that work remains to be to improve the coherence, quality and impact of the activities of the wider United Nation system in specific contexts that have the potential to promote peacebuilding. The United States takes note of the Peacebuilding Commission's efforts in 2013 to improve its relationship with the many other United Nations entities with a view to enhancing effectiveness at United Nations Headquarters and more importantly, in the fields of operations. The United States delegation will continue to participate with colleagues in increasing the effectiveness of the PBC, including by making further progress on the goals identified by the Secretary-General in the 2010 five-year review of the Commission.

The forthcoming annual session of the Peacebuilding Commission, on 23 June, United Nations Peacebuilding Day, will provide an important opportunity to focus on strategic issues that can sharpen both United Nations system support and wider international support for peacebuilding. The United States delegation is pleased to note the focus at that annual session on resource mobilization, which is welcome. The trends are extremely clear — extreme poverty and stalled development will increasingly be concentrated in conflict-affected States. That underscores that the PBC membership must give fresh, ambitious and strategic attention to resource mobilization. My delegation is glad that the annual session will afford an opportunity to take stock of lessons learned in the areas of transition and exit from peacebuilding theatres.

The PBC is undergoing a continuing learning process as it engages with post-conflict countries in various stages, in identifying its strengths, potentials and limitations. Conflict-prevention, long-term engagement and due consideration of the root causes of conflicts have continued to be as relevant as ever. The annual session will raise the flag higher in order to sustain the international community's attention to post-conflict situations after the newspaper headlines move on to other topics.

Discussion from the annual session will sharpen the context for the 2015 mandated review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture 10 years after its creation. The United States delegation welcomes the review and looks forward to thoughtful input from all corners: intergovernmental, national, civil society and academic. All stakeholders will emphasize in their own ways the need for elevated and increased strategic attention to peacebuilding and for us to bring critical scrutiny to the quality and impact of all of our instruments for promoting peacebuilding, starting with the Peacebuilding Commission and the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, more generally. The United States delegation looks forward to such active participation in the assessment.

Finally, the Peacebuilding Fund has shown increasing added value and, almost as important, the flexibility to adapt and refine its methods in order to ensure the greatest impact. The United States notes the success of the Peacebuilding Fund in responding rapidly and pursuing rigorous evaluation, and encourages it to continue to build a comparative advantage. Its work filling crucial gaps in donor funding and post-crisis and post-conflict countries is commendable, including by providing financial support for the reintegration of former combatants in Burundi, the Central African Republic and Guinea; completing the regional justice and security hubs in Liberia; and providing election support in Sierra Leone. The United States therefore welcomes greater insight into the strength of the Peacebuilding Fund's work.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): I align myself with the statement of the European Union. First of all, allow me to express my appreciation for the efforts of Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak as former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). Allow me also to wish his successor, Ambassador Antonio Patriota of Brazil every success in his new role as Chair of the PBC.

The Netherlands has been a strong supporter of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund

from their conception, and we continue to believe in the vital importance of their work. We therefore welcome the thorough reports under discussion today.

I would like to highlight three points regarding the PBC, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO).

First of all, on the Peacebuilding Commission, the Netherlands looks forward to the first annual review on 23 June. The Netherlands remains committed to a strong PBC and will actively participate in the review process. We are an engaged member of the Burundi configuration, and we believe that interaction with the PBC and our bilateral cooperation with Burundi make us more effective. We see a strong link between the success of the PBC and the greater United Nations peacebuilding structure. Of course, the close cooperation of the PBC with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council is crucial.

The second point concerns the Peacebuilding Fund. The PBF has been successful in addressing risks to peace in Guinea, advancing reconciliation, extending security and justice coverage in Liberia and conflict-prevention in Chad. I mention those because the PBF is often active in fragile and conflict-affected States that risk losing out when other conflicts move to the centre of the international community's attention. Therefore, the work and activities of the PBF are very important.

The Netherlands has contributed €20 million to the PBF for the period 2012-2015, because we believe that it occupies a strategic niche due to its catalytic nature, its flexibility and its legitimacy. We want the PBF to build on these comparative advantages and coordinate closely with the United Nations Development Programme, the Department of Political Affairs and others to strengthen the overall effectiveness of the United Nations in the field.

We also see a number of challenges for the PBF. Resources from the Fund are being used as additional funding for existing United Nations programmes rather than addressing strategic peacebuilding needs and filling critical funding gaps. A possible solution for this could be more strategic planning and involvement by the PBSO at the country level.

Let me also stress the importance of a strengthened focus on gender. The PBF pledged to reach a target of spending 15 per cent of its annual budget on gender issues, but this percentage was unfortunately not reached in the past few years. As my Minister for Foreign Affairs, Frans Timmermans, said during the Syrian women's conference held during the second Geneva Conference on Syria, women have a crucial role to play in implementing a future peace agreement. That is why their voice matters. Certainly after the session of the Commission on the Status of Women held last week and its successful conclusion, it is a point that the PBF should take to heart.

There are two areas where the PBF could make important gains. Monitoring and evaluation structures in countries need strengthening and, furthermore, the full impact of the United Nations in a given country should be visibly, consistent with the delivering as one approach. That could be done by increased focus on strategic impact and achievements in stabilization and peacebuilding. In that way, its reports would be more relevant.

My third and final point concerns the PBSO. We commend PBSO on the way it has acted on previous recommendations. We would like to encourage the PBSO to focus on four points in the coming period: first, a stronger focus on strategic analysis, design of programming and gender-related issues; secondly, maintaining sufficient operational capacity; thirdly, improving communications with relevant stakeholders; and fourthly, starting projects with non-United-Nations actors. As the Prime Minister of the Netherlands, Mark Rutte, said in his opening address at the Nuclear Security Summit held this week in The Hague, the pursuit of peace and progress can never be relaxed or abandoned. That should also be a guiding principle for the work of the PBSO.

It is our joint responsibility as Member States to persist in building and improving our common peacebuilding structures, which can have such significant and positive effects on the lives of those who have been affected by conflict. To that end, the Netherlands is and will remain a partner for the United Nations and other Member States for peace, justice and development.

The Acting President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Mayr-Harting (European Union): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU) and its member States. The candidate countries Turkey, Montenegro and Serbia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential

candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina; and the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

I thank the President of the Assembly for having convened today's important meeting concerning the Peacebuilding Commission's (PBC) annual report on its seventh session (A/68/729) and the Secretary-General's report (A/68/722) on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). This represents a good occasion to take stock of the achievements made over the past 12 months, draw some lessons and apply them to the future.

Ahead of the upcoming comprehensive 10-year review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in 2015, the PBC needs to demonstrate accelerated progress, cohesion in New York and in the field, better cooperation with the international financial institutions and various United Nations bodies and a concrete impact in the countries on its agenda. We look forward to the 2015 comprehensive review, taking into account progress that has been made by all United Nations actors since the PBC's creation.

Peacebuilding is a long-term enterprise. It goes beyond short-term crisis management and incorporates longer-term efforts to consolidate stability and build just and effective States with fair, peaceful and inclusive societies. We have learned from our common experience over the past years that no one-size-fits-all template can be applied to fluid and complex situations, where priority areas span across peace and security, development, humanitarian needs and human rights and where, all too often, we lose sight of the underlying political economy of countries and regions. Peacebuilding should therefore be country-focused. The United Nations system in all its parts, including the Peacebuilding Commission, has a pivotal role to play in that respect.

The EU is engaged in peacebuilding activities in many countries, through our broad and long-term engagement in development, economic cooperation, trade and other instruments. That is why the EU has fully participated in the PBC's work since its establishment. The EU has also been a member of all country-specific configurations of the PBC since their inception and is trying to provide the best support possible for their success, taking into account the different approaches required for each individual country on the agenda. Through the PBC, we can link our bilateral engagement to the global efforts and support for the United Nations, and we are represented by our delegations in all country-specific configurations.

The two annual reports before us today are both comprehensive documents illustrating the multifaceted challenges ahead. We appreciate the efforts of the Organizational Committee and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) to provide an assessment of the PBC's work in pursuing its forward agenda for 2013. In addition to actions pertaining to its core functions of advocacy, sustained attention, resource mobilization and the forging of coherence, we applaud the Commission for having addressed the important issue of activating the role of its membership and its links with the principal United Nations organs. We also welcome the attention to documenting the working methods and the emerging partnership between the PBSO and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation. The European Union fully supports the forward agenda for this year, which was distilled out of the analysis of activities over the past year.

As far as the country-specific configurations are concerned, there is some good progress to report, while many challenges remain to be tackled. In our view, the PBC still has a role to play in all those countries — and in other post-conflict countries — at varying levels of intensity, through its convening power as an intergovernmental advisory body. It would be useful to explore further the flexible use of the PBC in addressing conflict and post-conflict situations in countries not formally on the agenda. One may ask the question as to why no new situations have been added to the PBC's agenda in the past three years, either at the request of Governments or through a referral by the Security Council.

On the upside, the PBC positioned itself to support the transition of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone and initiated a process to consider its own transition to a lighter form of engagement in Sierra Leone. It also continued to accompany Burundi in the follow-up to the 2012 Geneva Partners Conference and the future transformation of the United Nations Office in Burundi into an electoral observation mission. It accompanied Liberia in the design and initiation of the national reconciliation process, improvement of the security and justice sectors and on issues related to land and natural resources. The Guinea configuration supported United Nations and regionally led efforts in support of Guinea's legislative elections.

Country-specific partnerships between the PBC, international financial institutions and regional development banks, on the basis of national development strategies, are a positive trend that should be developed further. At the same time, the PBC's engagement in Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic faces the challenges that accompany derailed peacebuilding processes in the wake of unconstitutional changes of Government. Those situations have underlined the limitations to the PBC's impact and the need to reflect further on the nature, scope and timing of exercising its role in drawing and sustaining the attention of the international community.

However, the upcoming elections in Guinea-Bissau open the perspective for a renewed engagement of the international community and an increased coordination and resource mobilization role for the configuration. We greatly welcome the appointment of a new Chair for the Central African Republic configuration, who has taken on his difficult task with great dynamism. The appointment of a new transitional Government paves the way for increased international support. We are pleased to note that the Chair, Ambassador Loulichki, has identified a number of important priority areas, in cooperation with the authorities, around which to coordinate and mobilize the international community.

The European Union welcomes the convening of the first-ever annual session of the PBC on 23 June under the theme "Sustainable support for peacebuilding: the domestic and international aspects", and will participate at an appropriate level. As the concept note indicates, both the national and the international components of resource mobilization need to be addressed with due consideration for the principle of national ownership and the fundamental objective of providing sustainable support in order to improve the lives of the affected population.

That leads me to my concluding part and the most important aspect of peacebuilding, namely, inclusive national ownership. Peacebuilding will succeed only if it is home-grown and nationally led, taking into account the needs and aspirations of the entire population of a country. Our duty as the international community includes supporting a sustained focus and attention on peacebuilding and State-building goals, while aligning behind nationally owned strategies. In that way, our political accompaniment should support a genuine commitment by the national authorities to addressing the root causes of instability and to fulfilling their obligations to their populations.

It is equally important to continue to ensure the ownership and political will of all members of the configurations. That is why we see the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and its national compacts as useful instruments of support, dialogue and engagement. They can help to complement the conclusion of a new social contract. Lastly, the EU looks forward to the final report of the independent review of the Peacebuilding Fund and the next Peacebuilding Fund annual stakeholders meeting, scheduled for June.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude to the former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak, whom I would like to thank for his great commitment. We also look forward to working hand in hand with the new Chair, Ambassador Antonio Patriota, the PBC membership and the Peacebuilding Support Office in order to move things forward. We stand ready to continue to support the efforts of the United Nations in all peacebuilding activities. That includes supporting and ensuring that the peacebuilding architecture can work in a coordinated manner with the United Nations system and live up to the expectations that accompanied its establishment.

Mr. Mukerji (India): We thank the Peacebuilding Commission for the report on its seventh session, contained in document A/68/729. We also thank the Secretary-General for his report on the Peacebuilding Fund, contained in document A/68/722. We would like to take this opportunity to outline what we feel should be some of the important principles that guide peacebuilding. That would allow us to better address the work done by the Peacebuilding Commission during its seventh session.

Peacebuilding is important. It is necessary to rebuild institutions and infrastructure in nations torn by civil war if we want to consolidate peace and avoid a relapse into conflict. A certain amount of external guidance is implicit in peacebuilding but it should not be at the cost of local ownership and a national agenda. That is why resolution 60/180, which established the Peacebuilding Commission, affirms that it is the primary responsibility of the national Governments of countries emerging from conflict to identify priorities and strategies for peacebuilding in order to ensure national ownership. The external footprint should be

light so as to avoid any outcomes of neo-colonialism or humanitarian intervention. We would also add that the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission should contain only countries referred by the Security Council or when the consent of the concerned Member State is explicit. There should not be any deviation from that cardinal principle.

Turning to disarmament, demobilization and integration, we all recognize that demobilized fighters will tend to return to a life of violence if they do not find a legitimate livelihood. The United Nations needs to go beyond short-term solutions and address the long-term socioeconomic development of the host country. Poverty and a lack of opportunity pose some of the most formidable barriers to sustainable peace. In that regard, the community-based approach is important in order to facilitate the economic and social reintegration of ex-combatants and to avoid resentment towards them. Such activities need to be long-term in nature. Quick-impact projects are good but cannot substitute for the funding gap between demobilization and reintegration.

The establishment and maintenance of public order are also important. A security vacuum after a peace agreement is dangerous as it may immediately lead to criminal activity. The focus, however, should be on the feasible. Given a scarcity of resources, the priority should be on ensuring impartiality in recruitment, the vetting of new recruits and training instead of seeking to make cultural change a central aspect of police reform.

The rule of law is also important as the consolidation of peace cannot be achieved unless the population is confident that the redressal of their grievances can be obtained. Judicial systems are highly specific to a culture and, given the diversity of customary or tribal dispute settlement mechanisms, there can be no generic recipe for promoting the rule of law. The imposition of external legal standards would only create resistance and generate a push-back from the host society. Peacebuilding needs to integrate indigenous and informal justice mechanisms into judicial reforms instead of viewing such mechanisms as incompatible with Western liberal values. In some post-conflict societies, the bulk of disputes are handled through customary law. In such situations, the allocation of scarce resources to formal institutions would be wasteful if such institutions had little to do with the realities of the population.

The report of the Peacebuilding Commission before us refers to the integration of peacekeeping and peacebuilding as critical to achieving durable peace and stability. There is also a reference to supporting an integrated approach to multidimensional peacebuilding. However, in our view, it is important to recognize that humanitarian and development actors and other peacebuilders and peacekeepers all have different tasks and priorities. We would therefore suggest that form follow function. In other words, actions should be integrated if and to the degree that they need to be in order to build sustainable peace.

The report of the Peacebuilding Commission suggests that the advantage of the Commission in the area of resource mobilization does not lie in fundraising. The report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund also informs us that contributions to the Fund in 2013 were only $41 million, as opposed to the target of an annual allocation of $100 million. That, we must admit, is somewhat disappointing. One of the primary objectives in establishing the Peacebuilding Commission was to ensure predictable financing for early recovery activities.

We would like to underline that peacebuilding is an area to which we attach importance. However, the Peacebuilding Commission is a relatively new body, and it would be difficult for us to come to the conclusion that its utility stands proven. In our statement today, we have already referred to several important systemic issues that need to be reviewed and redressed, including how to ensure sustainable financing for the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In that context, my delegation will participate actively in a multilateral review of the functioning of the Peacebuilding Commission at the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly and submit that review to our leaders for their guidance during the seventieth anniversary summit of the United Nations, to be held in 2015.

Mr. Elias-Fatile (Nigeria): I would like to thank the President for convening this important joint debate on the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/68/729) and the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722). My delegation is grateful to the Secretary-General for his report on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and to the Permanent Representative of Brazil and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) for his statement and for his

committed leadership of the Commission. I thank the Permanent Representative of Croatia and outgoing Chair of the PBC for his statement, which provided some critical perspectives on the activities of the PBC at its seventh session.

Nigeria would like to express its appreciation to the Chairs of the various country-specific configurations. I congratulate Mr. Mohammed Loulichki, Permanent Representative of Morocco, on his election as Chair of the Central African Republic configuration and for the good work he has been doing since then. I thank the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) for its untiring efforts in support of the work of the PBC. The example of Sierra Leone is testimony to the good work of everybody involved with the Commission.

Nigeria associates itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia.

Today's debate offers another opportunity for Member States to assess progress made and review the challenges to our collective efforts to sustain and support peace and socioeconomic development in countries emerging from conflict. In that regard, Nigeria has noted with satisfaction that the report for 2013 provides useful insights into the work of the PBC, particularly on the implementation of the 2010 review recommendations, the challenges confronting the Commission and some suggestions for addressing those challenges.

We are pleased to note from the report that there is an emerging partnership between the PBSO and the Dag Hammarskjöld Foundation aimed at supporting the Commission's consideration of a number of policy-related work streams. We agree with the report on the importance of further exploring ways to enhance a sense of collective responsibility for the Commission's objectives and the countries on its agenda, especially in the field. As the report indicates, periodic and situation-specific stocktaking should continue in order to identify additional areas that exemplify good practices and to help address those requiring further improvement. Nonetheless, we would like to add our views to some of the issues raised in the report and underline a few matters of interest.

The PBC has been a rallying point for key stakeholders in the work of peacebuilding by marshalling available resources, galvanizing political support for countries on its agenda and coordinating relevant actors within and outside the United Nations system in order to promote peacebuilding objectives. It has continued to focus the international community's attention on the political and socioeconomic challenges confronting countries under its mandate.

Despite all this, recent developments in the Central African Republic and South Sudan have again underscored the fact that peacebuilding is not a linear, progressive process. It is a multifaceted and all-encompassing initiative that must have a proactive focus if it is to achieve sustainable peace. More robust support on the part of the international community is needed for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts in the countries on the PBC agenda. We must bear in mind that while primary responsibility for peacebuilding efforts rests squarely with the relevant Governments, strengthening their capacities is the foundation for their success in that area. The members of the PBC therefore have an individual duty and a collective responsibility to support countries on its agenda. We believe that support for those countries must go beyond mere proclamations to specific, results-oriented action, which can be expressed through financial contributions or by sharing experience.

In that connection, Nigeria, through its Technical Aid Corps, offers its expertise for a framework for South-South cooperation aimed at giving the countries on the PBC agenda support for their civilian capacity-building requirements. We also call on Member States to forge more effective partnerships with such countries by helping their Governments build their national capacities. We should help to initiate and support any effort aimed at ensuring that national Governments drive the process while emphasizing the need for such crucial factors as credibility, accountability, effectiveness and responsibility.

Nigeria is looking forward to the first national substantive session of the PBC, to be held in June, and we would like to stress some issues as possible food for thought ahead of the session.

First, in view of the fact that much still needs to be done in order to make the best use of the PBC instrument, the session should consider ways and means by which the its mandates can be strengthened to attain that objective. We must continue to work to ensure that the Commission remains central and key to the sociopolitical development of post-conflict States, and that it continues to occupy its rightful place in the United Nations system.

Secondly, we note that the report says that the Commission has recognized the complementarity of work streams in the membership's role and in relations with United Nations principal organs. However, we must stress the importance of improving coordination and coherence and clearly delineating responsibilities among key stakeholders in the United Nations peacebuilding architecture so as to prevent duplication of effort and maximize output. In that regard, the PBC should explore ways of intensifying its efforts to strengthen inter-institutional cooperation and partnership with all relevant stakeholders, including the principal organs of the United Nations.

Thirdly, we should explore ways of mobilizing support for the long-term political and socioeconomic dimensions of peacebuilding from subregions and international partners. There can be no meaningful peacebuilding exercise without sufficient funding. For that reason, we commend Member States and other donors for their financial contributions, as reported by the Secretary-General on the activities of the PBF in 2013. We call for a closer working relationship between the PBC and the PBF.

Nigeria's commitment to United Nations peacebuilding efforts is not in doubt. We have stood on the front line of global peacekeeping and peacebuilding efforts, especially through our support for the United Nations in all its peace ventures, including as a member of the PBC Organizational Committee since its inception and as a member of all the PBC's country-specific configurations. We have made major contributions to the pursuit and maintenance of peace and security within the West African subregion and the Sahel. Today we reiterate our abiding commitment to the peaceful settlement of conflicts and to sustainable peace and development in Africa and beyond.

Mr. Lambertini (Italy): Italy aligns itself with the statement made by the observer of the European Union and welcomes the presentation of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its seventh session (A/68/729) and of the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722). We recognize the importance of the new strategic approach to the core functions of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) — advocacy, resource mobilization and forging coherence — and we commend the Commission for integrating the gender dimension throughout its work.

We welcome the transition process in Sierra Leone and support the efforts of its people and Government to address the challenges of development and transformation through the implementation of their Agenda for Prosperity. On the other hand, we are concerned by the worrisome news coming from the Central African Republic, which has relapsed into conflict, even though it has been on the Commission's agenda for the past six years.

Does the resurgent violence in the Central African Republic demonstrate the futility of the peacebuilding approach? We do not believe so, inasmuch as we do not believe that the successful striving of Sierra Leone means that post-conflict peacebuilding is the panacea for all ills. In that regard, I would like to quote Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld, who wisely said:

> "The pursuit of peace and progress cannot end in a few years in either victory or defeat. The pursuit of peace and progress, with its trials and its errors, its successes and its setbacks, can never be relaxed and never abandoned."

Those powerful and evocative words resonate with the analysis of Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson, who declared last week in the Security Council that, in the face of the unpredictable environment and the great risks involved in peacebuilding, the international community must always be prepared to renew its engagement and to adapt its approach to the situation on the ground (see S/PV.7143).

Today, Italy is at the forefront of the international effort to develop, strengthen and adapt the concept of peacebuilding in accordance with the paramount principle of national ownership. As recently as last month, the Sant'Anna School of Advanced Studies, one of the major academic institutions in Italy, based in Pisa, organized an high-level course in Somaliland to discuss the role of civilian personnel in peacebuilding with the local authorities. Moreover, Italy's engagement in the matter is centred on a clear priority, namely, the empowerment of women. According to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the ultimate aim of peacebuilding is to address "the deepest causes of conflict: economic despair, social injustice and political oppression" (*A/47/277, para. 15*).

Italy strongly believes that the transformative power of the economic, social and political empowerment of women and girls is key to tackling such challenges and essential to promoting the security, stability and development of societies emerging from armed conflict. That is why in 2013, we co-sponsored Security Council

resolution 2122 (2013) on women, peace and security, which focuses on women's leadership and participation in peacebuilding and on the gender dimension of peace processes and conflict resolution.

Our expertise in post-conflict peacebuilding has deep and evocative roots in our national history. From the ruins of World War II and the desolation of a civil war, Italy managed to heal its wounds and emerge as a democracy and one of the most prosperous countries in the world. Moreover, Italy was one of the six "inner" countries that, only a few years after the end of a devastating war, had the forward-looking courage to invest in the European integration process and thereby laid the foundations of the European Union, with the signing of the Treaty of Rome. That organization today comprises 28 members and has delivered more than half a century of peace, stability and well-being to the people of Europe.

For all these reasons and in a spirit of service, Italy therefore submits its candidature to the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission for the period 2015-2016. We are confident that, given our history and our sustained engagement in and our contribution to peacekeeping and peacebuilding to date, Italy can provide a marked contribution to the work of the Commission.

Mr. Grunditz (Sweden): Let me start by thanking the former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Ambassador Drobnjak, as well as the current Chair, Ambassador Patriota, for their statements this morning and for their commitment.

Peacebuilding is at the very core of the United Nations mandate and all parts of the United Nations system must contribute to that important undertaking. Sweden welcomes this opportunity to discuss peacebuilding issues in the General Assembly and would like to highlight a few specific topics.

First, with regards to the 2015 peacebuilding review, we would like to reiterate our view that that exercise should be broad and comprehensive in nature. The most important added value of the review is to have a frank discussion on how the system as a whole can become more effective when addressing peacebuilding at the country level. In that regard, the review should involve all stakeholders, ranging from Governments and the whole United Nations system to civil society, think-tanks and other relevant actors that can contribute. There are, for example, very important and valuable experiences to be drawn from the implementation at the country level of the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States and from the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding. That approach would also reflect the importance of inclusive processes in actual peacebuilding in the field.

The review should be broad in the sense that it should look at the peacebuilding efforts of the entire United Nations system and its strengths and weaknesses over the past 5 to 10 years. The core peacebuilding architecture, as we know it — the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) and the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO) — is of course at the centre of such an endeavour. However, many other actors play a crucial operational role at the country level, such as the United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies, but also other departments within the Secretariat. In particular, I would like to mention the importance of the United Nations Development Programme focusing its attention and resources on key peacebuilding issues. All activities and programmes in fragile States, regardless of who leads them, must be based on a thorough conflict analysis that guides the programme planning, design and implementation and the follow-up of results.

Let us therefore not miss the opportunity to give the review a broad mandate, scope and terms of reference. In the annual report before us (A/68/729), one action point is that the PBSO is to consult within the United Nations system and report back to the PBC with the result of that consultation. We would urge the PBSO to solicit views on all United Nations peacebuilding efforts, not merely the PBC/PBSO and PBF.

That brings me to my second and a closely related point, namely, United Nations coherence. Given the core mandate of United Nations peacebuilding efforts, which is to contribute to closing the gap between development, peace and security, to propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery, and to facilitate transition efforts at large, coherence is, without doubt, not only one of the success factors but also one of the key challenges facing the United Nations. The establishment of the global focal point arrangement is a welcome step in that direction. The challenge and real test for the added value of the global focal point will be joint planning and implementation at the country level.

In a broader sense, however, genuine coherence will take place only when the whole United Nations

system, both its political representatives and the various development actors in a country, behave in a coherent, aligned and harmonized way. As an illustration, when a mission is drawing down, it is essential that the United Nations country team step up in order to maintain the focus, both among donors and in the host Government, on key issues and resources of importance to sustainable peace and State-building. That is also why the review of United Nations peacebuilding activities should be broad and should engage all actors operating at the country level, not only the narrower core of the peacebuilding architecture.

Mr. Deng (South Africa), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Thirdly, on the PBF, we welcome the increased total support to the Fund during 2013 over 2012. Sweden continues to be a top donor. That also comes with the responsibility to support a more effective and efficient use of the funds. We take an active part in those discussions. The PBF certainly has a strategic niche, and few other donors are present in a country so soon after a conflict. As a response to the request of many donors, the Fund has made significant advances with regards to monitoring and evaluation, which Sweden welcomes.

One area for further improvement is gender equality. We believe that the Fund can do more to focus on women as peacebuilders and agents of change. Compared to other actors, the PBF has been better at allocating resources to women's empowerment. However, still more could be done in that field.

Finally, to echo my own previous comment on coherence, the PBF has a great potential to become an effective tool for United Nations integration and the United Nations acting as one in conflict-affected and fragile countries. That is an area that could be further strengthened and should also be a central part of the peacebuilding review.

Mr. Ružička (Slovakia): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for convening today's important meeting. It is a great opportunity for all of us to discuss and share views concerning the annual reports of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/68/729) and the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722).

Slovakia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union earlier. Nevertheless, I wish to make a few additional remarks in my national capacity. Before I do so, however, I would like to express my appreciation for the work, leadership and dedication of the former Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak, Permanent Representative of Croatia, and to congratulate the new Chair, Mr. Antonio Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil.

Slovakia attaches great importance to the work and goals of the Peacebuilding Commission. We fully support its continuous efforts aimed at bringing about durable peace and stability to many nations around the world and at helping to avoid a relapse into a conflict. At the same time, we are fully aware that peacebuilding is a complex process requiring time and resources. It consists of various different components and layers which are mutually interconnected and interlocked. Seldom does one country have the ability and capacity to contribute to the support and development of all peacebuilding instruments and mechanisms. Hence, the specialization and thematic focus of Member States become an added value towards the overall success of the entire project of peacebuilding.

For some years now, Slovakia has been pursuing security sector reform (SSR) as one of the key elements of post-conflict rebuilding and stabilization. After the release of the second report of the Secretary-General on SSR (A/67/970) in August 2013, Slovakia as the co-Chair of the Group of Friends of Security Sector Reform, together with South Africa and the United Nations, organized several events on different levels with the aim of making the United Nations approach to that holistic instrument for peace and security more effective.

The direct experience in the field, including that of many United Nations peace missions and operations in post-conflict countries, clearly shows that a nationally-led and inclusive SSR process, based on true partnerships in implementing the projects and regional engagement, can progressively deal with the root causes of insecurity and fragility and create an enabling environment for sustainable development to take place.

With that goal in mind, Slovakia made its first contribution of $40,000 to a United Nations pooled fund administered by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office. Slovakia hence became the fifty-fifth financial contributor to the Peacebuilding Fund in line with its commitment to financially reinforce United Nations

Development Programme projects in post-conflict countries and to strengthen peacebuilding efforts, particularly around security sector reform.

In conclusion, I wish to confirm the continuing support of Slovakia to the United Nations peacebuilding activities and architecture, as well as our readiness for close coordination and cooperation in the area of common interest with all Member States.

Mr. Oyarzun Marchesi (Spain) (*spoke in Spanish*): Spain fully aligns itself with the statement delivered by the observer of the European Union and wishes to make the following additional contributions.

The maintenance of international peace and security is a fundamental goal of the United Nations. However, on many occasions we have seen countries relapse into the conflicts from which they had recently emerged. The Peacebuilding Commission plays a fundamental role in the peacekeeping endeavour. Spain has actively supported the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. We are the eighth-largest contributor to the Peacebuilding Fund. Moreover, we have been members of its Organizational Committee for eight years and a major contributor to the Fund for the past four years. Furthermore, we are members of all of its country-specific configurations.

The report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its seventh session (A/68/729) is an excellent basis on which to advance the review process of the Peacebuilding Commission's architecture in 2015. In that regard, I would like to reaffirm some of the ideas that have already been mentioned by the ambassadors who spoke before me.

The Commission has a valuable presence in the field that we should take advantage of. We must continue to insist on the importance of national ownership. In that regard, the involvement of countries on the Commission's agenda is key. Without their perspectives or their vision, the Commission's work would fail. In addition, as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission indicated, it is essential to count on more and work more closely with the regional and subregional organizations.

The Commission is in an ideal position to work with the other major bodies of the United Nations, in particular with the General Assembly and the Security Council. It also has a privileged position in maintaining a strong relationship with the special representatives of the Secretary-General. Indeed, it is a question of joining efforts, sharing experiences and carrying out joint analyses.

Lasting peace necessarily depends on strengthening the rule of law in all its dimensions. The international community must support the development of civil capacities and institution-building in those countries that have undergone recent conflicts. It is also crucial to promote inclusive economic growth and job creation. Furthermore, as was said by the Swedish Ambassador a few moments ago, women must occupy a central role in the peacebuilding processes. To that end, we must remove the obstacles that impede their full participation in national reconstruction.

Spain is working, alongside other Member States, in the preparation of the high-level meeting that will take place on 23 June, and at which we will be ready to contribute all our experiences and new ideas for the future.

Spain has supported the peacebuilding processes for many years. We have supported capacity-building in the justice and security sectors, putting into practice training programmes and the exchange of experiences and best practices in accordance with the priorities identified by the national actors. We hope to be able to share our experiences and the lessons we have learned during those processes in the important high-level meeting and, in doing so, demonstrate once again Spain's unwavering commitment to the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Çevik (Turkey): At the outset, I would like to thank the President for his opening statement. I would also like to thank the former and current Chairs of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Permanent Representatives of Croatia and Brazil, Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak and Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, for their briefings.

Today, peacebuilding has become an integral and essential part of international support to a conflict-affected country. Thanks to the considerable endeavours within the United Nations system in recent years, we now have a better understanding and a well-developed United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

Peacebuilding initiatives and tasks have been becoming more diverse and complicated. They cover wide-ranging activities, from justice to economic recovery and from the security sector to women's participation in peacebuilding processes. Given

the huge area of operation, we believe that the United Nations plays a central role in coordinating, planning and ensuring coherence among international actors. Therefore, the United Nations peacebuilding architecture must be constantly updated and improved to meet today's requirements. In that regard, we look forward to the comprehensive review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, to take place in 2015.

The PBC has a special place in that architecture. Its strength lies in its Member-State-driven approach. It can address the needs and requests of post-conflict Member States through the will and support of its Member States. In that vein, the PBC's potential must be better tapped. Its coordination and communication with the relevant United Nations bodies, such as the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, must be improved.

With that understanding, we welcome the Security Council briefing on post-conflict peacebuilding (see S/PV.7143), which took place on 19 March. The annual session of the PBC, which will be held in June, is another important opportunity to better identify how to make the PBC more effective in terms of its communication, both with the relevant United Nations bodies and with the countries it deals with.

The Peacebuilding Fund is another important tool of United Nations peacebuilding efforts. We believe that the Fund is a vital instrument for the international community and conflict-affected countries in our common efforts to provide timely and focused attention to specific needs. Turkey is a regular contributor to the Fund, and we welcome the fact that the Fund's donor base has been improving in recent years, as the Secretary-General's report (A/68/722) indicates.

We also commend the work of the Peacebuilding Support Office under the leadership of Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins. The Office is a vital complementary element of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, which ensures coherence, the timely delivery of support and coordination.

For its part, Turkey has been engaged in preventive diplomacy, peacemaking, peacekeeping and post-conflict peacebuilding efforts, which are closely interlinked. It is essential to undertake them within a coherent and strategic framework. Together with Finland and the Group of Friends of Mediation, we have been working on how to further the concept of mediation, both within the United Nations and beyond. In our view, mediation is an effective cross-cutting tool that is consent-based and applies to all stages of the conflict cycle. We regard mediation and facilitation as the most cost-effective and efficient way of preventing and resolving conflicts, and thus saving precious lives.

Furthermore, we provide large-scale peacebuilding support to countries such as Afghanistan and Somalia. Turkey also actively supports multilateral peacebuilding platforms. In addition to our financial contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund, which I mentioned previously, we are actively engaged in the work of the PBC through our membership in four of the six country-specific configurations.

Before concluding, I would like to emphasize that, for peacebuilding efforts to succeed, affected countries must take the lead and ownership in determining their futures and work with the international community to ensure the inclusivity of the process.

Mr. Raja Zaib Shah (Malaysia): At the outset, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the President of the General Assembly for convening this important annual debate. Let me also congratulate Ambassador Patriota of Brazil on his election as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) at its eighth session. I would also like to express my delegation's appreciation to Ambassador Drobnjak of Croatia for his excellent leadership and chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission last year.

At this juncture, Malaysia would like to associate itself with the statement delivered by the representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement of Countries.

My delegation would also like to commend the Peacebuilding Support Office in the preparation of the report of the PBC (A/68/729) on its seventh session and welcome the report of the Secretary-General (A/68/722) on the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF). Malaysia welcomes the insights, findings and conclusions contained in the two reports. In that regard, my delegation would like to express our views on some of the pertinent findings contained in the reports.

Malaysia has always been a staunch believer in peacebuilding as an important aspect of the work of the United Nations in the maintenance of international peace and security. The reports play an important role in guiding us on the work of the PBC in post-conflict reconstruction in countries that are emerging from

conflict. My delegation concurs with the reports on the need for continued advocacy, political accompaniment, resource mobilization and the forging of coherence as the principal activities of the PBC.

Despite the various progress made by the PBC in its work, my delegation believes that there is room for improvement in the PBC's efforts to create awareness and understanding of the concept of peacebuilding. In that regard, my delegation welcomes the decision to convene an annual session of the PBC. The annual session is an opportunity for Member States to realign the international community's perception of the PBC and its work.

While the annual session will enable closer interaction and engagement among the relevant stakeholders in New York, it also presents the prospect of identifying important issues and challenges to Member States and other international organizations in post-conflict reconstruction. Such interaction and engagement with different teams will bring about awareness and a comprehensive understanding of the role of peacebuilding in preventing countries from relapsing into conflict.

Malaysia has always believed that economic revitalization is crucial in supporting countries emerging from conflict. In that respect, attracting investment requires an effective legal framework to protect the concessions of international investors and the rights of the local community.

We have supported efforts to revitalize the economy of Liberia through the participation of Sime Darby. Sime Darby employs a total of 3,800 Liberian workers in its plantation estate. The company continues to display its social responsibility through engagement with various stakeholders, namely, the Government of Liberia, the local community, non-governmental organizations, including Green Advocates, and other relevant international partners. Strengthening relations with the local community is part and parcel of its corporate social responsibility. The company has also embarked upon efforts to support the community's basic needs, including by building roads, hospitals and schools and providing employment.

While Sime Darby has continued to be supportive of economic revitalization efforts in Liberia, it has also experienced various challenges in the country. My delegation is of the view that more work must be done to harmonize local land laws in order to protect both international corporations and the local community. We believe the PBC is well placed to provide the necessary advice on policy development and legal framework formulation in order to strengthen the rule of law. At the same time, the work of UN-Habitat and the Land Commission on land law and land dispute resolution mechanisms in Liberia should be commended. My delegation is confident that, with due attention and continued consultation with the relevant stakeholders, Liberia is on the right track to having a more streamlined land law that can attract and facilitate investment in the country.

The report of the PBC continues to highlight the importance of resource mobilization in supporting peacebuilding activities. In that connection, my delegation underscores the significance of partnerships with international financial institutions and regional development banks in generating the financial resources needed to sustain peacebuilding efforts. However, Malaysia is of the view that developing the revenue-generating capacity of countries in transition is equally important. As such, we believe the PBC should continue to promote credible strategies for strengthening governance and public administration in such countries, with a view to enhancing revenue generation.

In a similar vein, greater synergy is also needed between the PBC and the PBF. We commend the PBF's role in 2013 as reflected in the report. Its capital intervention in 14 countries, with a disbursement of $87.6 million, only testifies to the important role of the Fund in providing immediate financial assistance to countries in transition. Such direct interventions have made it possible for peace and stability to prevail in conflict situations. Despite that, my delegation would like to see better alignment of the Fund's activities with those of the PBC.

My delegation also believes that participation and inclusivity on the part of Member States are essential. We underscore the important role played by the Chairs of the PBC and the configurations to facilitate work with countries on the Commission's agenda. We are of the view that such efforts remain important in linking the PBC, which is based in New York, with countries in transition. Nevertheless, we also believe that the role of resident embassies of the PBC's Member States is an under-explored resource for the PBC. We would like to emphasize the importance of continuing discussion of this matter, with the aim of elevating the role of

resident embassies in the field. Embassies can support the PBC during field visits and oversee implementation of agreements with host countries.

In conclusion, my delegation is of the opinion that the work of the PBC and the PBF has become increasingly challenging with the evolving scenarios of international peace and security. In that regard, Malaysia calls for a greater political and financial commitment from Member States in support of the work of both the Commission and the Fund.

Mr. Yamazaki (Japan): I am pleased to be able to address the General Assembly on the occasion of the discussion of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its seventh session (A/68/729) and of the report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722).

I would first like to express our gratitude to Ambassador Drobnjak, outgoing Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for his stewardship of the work of the PBC in 2013. The PBC report reflects on the main functions and work of the Commission, while outlining efforts going forward to implement the agenda adopted in the previous report (A/67/715). Japan welcomes the progress made in a number of areas that demonstrates the added value of the PBC and further strengthens its impact on the ground, including strengthening the PBC's role as an adviser to the Security Council, documenting a compendium of established working methods and developing a new partnership with the Mano River Union.

Last year, as a Chair of the PBC's working group on lessons learned, Japan convened three meetings intended to strengthen the PBC's core functions, as well as to address the peacebuilding thematic issues designated for 2013. In those meetings, the working group shed light on practical approaches for the Commission in supporting the organization of donor partner conferences, assisting in generating domestic resources for funding critical peacebuilding priorities, and pushing forward gender-responsive national reconciliation. The discussions in the meetings helped to sharpen the focus on the Commission's strengths as well as its potential. The working group also facilitated more efficient and effective engagement on the part of the PBC vis-à-vis the countries on its agenda and other United Nations and non-United Nations entities. Needless to say, those efforts must be continued and further strengthened so that the Commission can make the best possible preparation for the 2015 review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

Japan hopes that the working group's activities will contribute to the preparation of the review by drawing practical lessons for country-specific configurations and offering a continuing platform for cross-learning among them. In that regard, at the formal meeting of the PBC's Organizational Committee, held on 29 January, Japan proposed "Lessons learned on transition and exit of United Nations missions" as the theme for the 2014 working group's lessons-learned activities. By drawing on the experience of countries where United Nations missions are transitioning or downsizing, or where non-PBC-agenda States are in post-transition, the working group will tackle the question of how the PBC can best address the need for a coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation. Japan hopes to work closely with the current Chair of the PBC, Ambassador Patriota, and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations.

The Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) is a very important element in United Nations peacebuilding activities. In that regard, Japan welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on the Fund. This month we made an additional contribution of $10 million to the PBF, which brings Japan's total contribution to it to $42.5 million. That contribution is an expression of Japan's firm commitment to peacebuilding and its high expectations of the Fund

As stated in the Secretary-General's report, the activities of the Peacebuilding Fund achieved significant progress in terms of both quantity and quality. We expect the PBF to further enhance cooperation and coordination among the relevant stakeholders in host countries, through the Joint Steering Committee. On the other hand, there is still room for the Fund to strengthen its support for gender issues. We expect it to enhance its efforts to mainstream gender equality in peacebuilding by strengthening its programmes' gender focus.

The year 2014 will be a crucial one for the PBF. The periodic review is on its way and a new business plan for the next three years is to be formulated. We expect that the review of its business model, its strategic management and its strategic positioning will provide the Fund with an excellent opportunity to enhance its unique characteristics, including its speed, flexibility, catalytic function and ability to enhance national ownership.

The PBC and the PBF, with the support of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), continue to be at the centre of the United Nations peacebuilding

architecture. In that regard, Japan appreciates the ongoing support provided by the PBSO. Japan remains strongly committed to peacebuilding and the activities of the PBC and the PBF. We look forward to achieving this year's goals.

Mrs. Evstigneeva (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We consider peacebuilding assistance to be one of the key factors in the effective settlement of conflicts and in preventing their recurrence. We also believe that the success and long-term nature of the results of such assistance depends upon following the principle of national ownership of States when deciding peacebuilding priorities and overseeing their practical implementation by national bodies that represent the interests of society as a whole.

The United Nations of course has a particular role to play in coordinating international efforts in favour of post-conflict recovery. That work requires the coordinated efforts of Member States, United Nations funds and programmes, the Secretariat, regional organizations and international financial institutions.

We must note that international assistance for peacebuilding remains fragmentary. The lack of a coordinated division of labour leads to the duplication of peacebuilding efforts as well as the misallocation and waste of existing resources and tools. In that regard, it is important that all parties involved in peacebuilding efforts should work strictly within their mandates and established normative frameworks. It is obvious that, to achieve practical results, we need further efforts in constructing the peacebuilding architecture, both within the Organization and at the country level.

The Russian Federation supports the work of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) as one of the central intergovernmental bodies for coordinating peacebuilding assistance. We see its added value in the quality advice it provides to the Security Council, upon its request, on countries on the agendas of both bodies. We believe that the Commission, as part of its mandate, must make a contribution as well in addressing important cross-cutting issues having to do with peacebuilding and the entire United Nations system, and requiring a multifaceted discussion with Member States within the main bodies of the Organization.

Up to now, the PBC has accumulated significant experience in direct dialogue with national Governments on the basis of shared oversight of compliance and coordination of efforts of international players in implementing the priorities set by post-conflict countries. The stabilization of the situations in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Burundi could serve as positive examples. We need to build on those successes, including through further security sector reform, ensuring progress in socioeconomic development and fighting poverty and unemployment. A particular role in that regard must be played by United Nations funds and programmes. Accordingly, the experience of Guinea-Bissau and the Central African Republic requires us to do a thorough analysis of peacebuilding efforts, focusing on the reasons that efforts sometimes do not yield the expected results and, in some cases, why such efforts do not keep the situation from relapsing into a new hot phase.

With our overall positive assessment of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission for 2013, we would like to express our appreciation to the former Permanent Representative of Croatia, Mr. Ranko Vilović, for the work he did as the Chair of the PBC, and to wish the new Chair of the Commission, the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Mr. Guilherme de Aguiar Patriota, success in that endeavour.

The empirical analysis in the final report on the Commission's work (A/68/729), having to do with its functions in drawing attention to countries on its agenda, mobilizing resources and increasing coherence, once again proves that practical success in implementation in each specific country situation can be achieved only with a mutually agreed, complementary, comprehensive and strategic approach.

We share the conclusions of the Commission regarding the priority of supporting national peacebuilding efforts, of the vital need to improve coordination in the Commission and with the main bodies of the Organization, and in seeking a more active involvement in handling specific mandates of regional and subregional political and financial agencies. All of the foregoing, when undertaken with proper consideration of lessons learned and best practices and focusing on addressing root causes of conflict, will, in our view, increase the added value, effectiveness and sustainability of the results of the Commission's work.

This year's planned events, including the Commission's first annual session and the start of preparations for the upcoming 2015 review, will help, to a large extent, strengthen the Commission as an intergovernmental body that plays a central role in the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

One of the most important components of the peacebuilding architecture remains the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), a mechanism for emergency financing that helps to attract long-term resources for restoration and development. The PBF has proven its effectiveness. As a result, Russia is continuing, on an annual basis, to contribute to the PBF an amount of $2 million. Providing assistance through the PBF to programmes and projects developed by Governments and the United Nations allows us to duly consider the priorities of the host countries and ensure their responsible approach to using that support. While it is important to stress that recipient countries not become addicted to assistance, we continue to believe that there is no alternative to the principle of national apportionment of resources. It is therefore not acceptable to artificially impose any thematic projects on countries. Prioritizing areas of cooperation must be determined by recipient Governments themselves.

Mrs. Byaje (Rwanda): I would like to thank the President for organizing today's meeting. I also thank Mr. Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Permanent Representative of Brazil, Chair of Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for his statement. Allow me also to extend my sincere thanks to Mr. Ranko Vilović, former Permanent Representative of Croatia, and former Chair of the PBC, for his dedication and strong commitment to the work of the Commission during the year 2013. We also thank the current Permanent Representative of Croatia, Mr. Vladimir Drobnjak, for his presentation of the report of the PBC on its seventh session (A/68/729).

Rwanda would like to join others in taking note with appreciation the report of the Peacebuilding Commission and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722), which provide a comprehensive analysis of the progress made so far in the implementation of the 2010 review recommendations, as well as challenges the Commission is still facing and the way forward to enhance its value and strengthen its advisory role. Based on the foregoing, I would like to state the following.

My delegation highlights the importance of building on the important elements emanating from the reports and from the Security Council briefing (see S/PV.6954) and informal interactive dialogue of 25 and 26 April 2013, respectively, which provided an opportunity to exchange opinions on how the United Nations can draw upon the unique composition structure of the PBC and enhance the Commission's role in advising its parent organs.

It is promising that the Commission has recognized the complementarity of the work streams on the role of the membership and the relations with United Nations principal organs. We believe that the Commission can make an impact only if it is able to leverage its unique membership structure to bring political support to its engagement in the field and within intergovernmental forums and with strong advocacy. Furthermore, from within the PBC's unique membership structure, there is a wealth of expertise, experience and financial resources that each individual member should be prepared to share and contribute, depending on capacity and comparative advantage.

Linked to its relationship with other entities is the issue of coordination and coherence. We call upon the PBC to maintain mutually reinforcing relations with senior United Nations leadership in the field. The PBC can bring the political weight of its membership to back the United Nations leadership at country-level, and United Nations missions are expected in turn to vigorously pursue and support the priority areas agreed between the PBC and the countries on its agenda. Unity of strategy and clarity regarding the division of labour will help identify opportunities requiring support and challenges demanding a timely response. That would help the United Nations to deliver as one, remain focused on nationally identified priorities in the field and ensure that United Nations entities at Headquarters and their guidance to field missions are aligned with national peacebuilding priorities.

On resource mobilization, we call for continued advocacy on behalf of the countries on the agenda with a view to helping to underscore political and socioeconomic progress and attract broader assistance and/or investments. We are particularly pleased with efforts deployed by the country-specific configurations. We commend in particular the initiative to conduct an assessment mission of the PBC's engagement with Sierra Leone in November 2013. We hope that the recommendations of the mission will help the PBC envisage how it might adapt its engagement with the evolving needs of Sierra Leone in the light of the country's Agenda for Prosperity.

We also welcome the Commission's plans to support Guinea-Bissau in completing a full democratic cycle, coordinating security sector reform and promoting

food security and rural development. We also take note of the Commission's pivotal role in supporting the transition from United Nations Office in Burundi to a United Nations country team by the end of the year, as well as its support for socioeconomic transformation in Liberia.

Mindful of the positive role of women in post-conflict reconstruction, Rwanda welcomes the Commission's consideration of the gender dimension in peacebuilding activities. We commend the established partnership with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women to explore and raise awareness of the transformative role of women in post-conflict societies. We are particularly eager to see the Secretary-General's commitment to allocating 15 per cent of United Nations-managed funds to projects promoting gender equality and women's empowerment materialize.

On the Commission's working methods, we encourage the Commission to identify and document best practices from the past nine years, including by encouraging cross-learning among configurations. We hope that the upcoming 2015 review will provide an opportunity to address outstanding issues in the working methods of the Commission. We also believe that, since 2005, the United Nations should have been able to identify some best practices and lessons learned on the kinds of interventions that make a real difference in the lives of people in post-conflict countries. The 2015 review should help us take stock of how the PBC could support an evolving and expanding United Nations peacebuilding agenda.

Turning to the report of the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), we note that there was a significant increase in investments over the 2012 level. We thank the Member States and other donors that have made those valuable contributions.

The PBF is becoming a viable instrument for a rapid and catalytic peacebuilding response, which is what the countries concerned need most. We call upon the Secretary-General to explore how the Fund can invest in encouraging capacity-building, including by facilitating the transfer of knowledge and expertise between countries emerging from conflict and countries from the Global South.

My country stands ready to share knowledge on our post-conflict recovery path since 1994. Rwanda has already provided high-level expertise on number of issues, including, inter alia, experience and expertise in aid coordination, specialized police capacities, military institution-building and security sector reform. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, we remain open to providing such support.

Mr. Liu Jieyi (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation wishes to thank the President for holding today's meeting. China also wishes to thank the Permanent Representative of Croatia, Ambassador Drobnjak, for introducing the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its seventh session (A/68/729), and commends the Permanent Representative of Brazil, Ambassador Patriota, for the work he has done as the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC). We welcome the statement he made at the beginning of today's meeting.

The 2005 World Summit took the decision to create the Peacebuilding Commission, which was an important initiative by the United Nations in the field of post-conflict peacebuilding and is of great significance in terms of helping post-conflict countries carry out peacebuilding activities.

In recent years, the PBC has endeavoured to implement the relevant mandates of the General Assembly and the Security Council and has worked actively in terms of coordinating international assistance for peacebuilding in post-conflict countries. It has accumulated great experience and achieved important results. Worthy of special mention in that regard is that the United Nations has made remarkable achievements in helping Timor-Leste and Sierra Leone to carry out peacebuilding activities, enabling those two countries to become success stories in the field. The international community should seek to learn practical lessons from the experience gained in those countries.

We believe that in order to further strengthen post-conflict peacebuilding activities, it is important to take into account the following aspects.

First, consolidating peace and stability is a prerequisite for peacebuilding. In countries having recently emerged from conflicts, internal situations remain relatively fragile. Therefore, maintaining national security and stability should be regarded as the priority of priorities. The international community should, through peaceful means, including good offices, mediation and dialogue, help the countries concerned achieve political transition and national reconciliation. It is important to help the parties concerned to take into

account the long-term interests of their country and people, strengthen communication and coordination, enhance mutual trust, maintain unity and, in a spirit of mutual accommodation, resolve their differences properly so as to preserve national security and stability.

Secondly, more rapid economic recovery and development are the basis for peacebuilding. Economic and social underdevelopment is the root cause of conflict. Many post-conflict countries and regions face numerous challenges in terms of rebuilding their economies and infrastructure, eradicating poverty, employment and the provision of social safeguards. The international community should therefore focus on mobilizing resources. Countries should meet their assistance commitments in a timely way to help host countries achieve prompt economic recovery and reconstruction, enabling the population to enjoy the dividends of peace as soon as possible so as to lay a solid foundation for a peace process and post-conflict reconstruction.

Thirdly, respect for national ownership lies at the heart of peacebuilding activities. Post-conflict countries bear the primary responsibility for their own peacebuilding. The histories and prevailing conditions of such countries vary. The international community should therefore fully respect the sovereignty and will of the countries concerned and help such countries to explore a development path that matches their own conditions and makes full use of their advantages. It is also important, in line with their readiness, to help such countries in the area of capacity-building, with a focus on the training of human resources. Countries should fully utilize their own human resources and expertise in order to enhance the level of governance.

Fourthly, international coordination underpins successful peacebuilding. Peacebuilding involves various political, security, economic, development and social issues. International organizations should therefore strengthen their coordination, with the United Nations and the PBC having a coordinating role in that regard. In November, the United Nations, the African Union (AU), the World Bank and the African Development Bank cooperated with each other and made a joint visit to the Sahel region in order to implement the United Nations integrated strategy for the Sahel. That visit achieved good results. That is an excellent practice and should be further continued and expanded. We hope that the United Nations will establish a stable and cooperative relationship with international and regional institutions, while paying particular attention to bringing into play the unique advantages of regional organizations, such as the AU, and subregional organizations and working together with such organizations in order to ensure that peacebuilding activities yield meaninfgul results.

China has always supported peacebuilding activities in post-conflict countries and has actively participated in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. In 2015, there will be the five-year review of the Peacebuilding Commission. We hope that that review will help to further exploit the PBC's potential, thereby enabling it to play an even greater role in post-conflict peacebuilding activities.

China is ready to work with the international community and to continue play an active role in helping post-conflict countries to achieve lasting peace and sustainable development.

Mr. Percaya (Indonesia): I wish to thank the President for having convened this meeting. I would also like to thank Ambassador Antonio de Aguiar Patriota, Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), for his comprehensive statement. Allow me also to commend the work and commitment of the previous Chair, who is also the new Vice-Chair, Ambassador Vladimir Drobnjak, and all the Chairs of the six country-specific configurations, in particular Ambassador Mohammed Loulichki of Morocco, as the new Chair for the Central African Republic configuration.

My delegation would also like to express its deep appreciation to Assistant Secretary-General Judy Cheng-Hopkins, head of the Peacebuilding Support Office (PBSO), and Kenneth Gluck, deputy head of the PBSO, along with their entire team, for their hard work and strong commitment in supporting the mandate of the PBC and in administering the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF).

Indonesia associates itself with the statement delivered earlier this morning by the representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement caucus of the PBC.

Taking forward the recommendations of the 2010 review, particularly on the PBC functions of advocacy, sustained attention, resource mobilization and forging coherence, Indonesia is pleased to welcome the 2013 PBC annual report (A/68/729). We note with appreciation the report's focus on supporting the working methods of

the Peacebuilding Commission and on addressing the various areas that need further policy reflection.

As we know, the PBC was established as an advisory body but was supported by the strong convening capacity of the United Nations. While recommendatory in nature, the PBC functions, in the face of the understandable and ever-present desire of the various sides, not least the conflict-affected countries, in order to have a robust impact. In addition to harnessing support for the particular conflict recovery and reconstruction imperatives of the six countries on its agenda, over the years the Commission has played a vital role in garnering international attention to post-conflict peacebuilding. It has sought to enable a more coherent effort among the relevant United Nations and non-United Nations actors.

However, various challenges remain. The inadequacy of financial and technical resources, as well as political support, have been seen as among the key reasons for the Commission's work not being clearly visible. We must all step up our contribution in order to help strengthen the PBC's work. Allow me to share some of Indonesia's views on future challenges and opportunities, as well as the main elements that could contribute to the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture.

First, while stressing the importance of nationally owned peacebuilding strategies, we underscore the significance of the continuity of efforts on the basis of the agenda and the recommendations contained in previous PBC annual reports. Many good points have already been identified, and the focus should be on the implementation of such issues. Indeed, the effectiveness of the PBC will continue to be determined by the results of the Commission's concrete actions.

In the context of the role of the PBC membership, with its unique structure, we concur that the Commission has yet to fully capitalize on that area of strength in order to maximize its impact. There needs to be a deepening of action-oriented interaction among members, whom the PBC should continue to encourage to take up voluntary tasks on the basis of their expertise in support of the peacebuilding priorities identified by the local population.

Secondly, it is crucial to ensure the coherence of peacekeeping and peacebuilding so as to prevent a relapse into conflict and to build sustainable peace and development. Security Council resolution 2086 (2013) underscores the interlinkage of multidimensional peacekeeping operations and expresses its willingness to make use of the advisory, advocacy and resource mobilization roles of the PBC in peacebuilding. We hope that the interface between the Security Council and the PBC will also translate into greater synergy between peacekeeping and peacebuilding.

Thirdly, resource mobilization remains pivotal. Indonesia has underlined a comprehensive approach to this task whereby other avenues of trade and investment are fully utilized, in addition to aid. In that context, Indonesia helped to facilitate the PBC's 2008 policy formulation on the role of the private sector in peacebuilding. We are pleased that the Commission's engagement with the private sector aimed at fostering economic activity has intensified, with numerous commendable initiatives undertaken in recent years. But there is still room for improved engagement with the private sector in peacebuilding. Indonesia supports the PBC's efforts to prioritize activities relating to resource mobilization, including increasing the focus on supporting national efforts to raise resources. As the report says, the Commission's role is not to fund-raise but, rather, to broaden the base and secure the buy-in of traditional and new bilateral and multilateral donors in host countries. Moreover, we believe that bringing in essential civilian expertise through, and in partnership with, the United Nations civilian-capacity initiative could have a greater impact on the Commission's work.

Fourthly, the holding of the PBC's first annual special session on 23 June, as its chief substantive and policy-guidance forum, will play a significant role in improving the Commission's working methods. The session will also serve to foster an annual opportunity for broad-based engagement on the part of Member States, countries on the agenda and other relevant stakeholders. Indonesia is pleased to be involved both in facilitating the modalities of the session and in identifying and discussing an overarching theme and sub-themes. We believe that resource mobilization, capacity-building and lessons learned, as aspects of the main theme, will pave the way for the Commission to take practical and concrete action. Since the relevant Government bodies in capitals normally conduct policy and make decisions on peacebuilding initiatives, we encourage Member States to send their relevant capital-based senior officials to engage directly at the one-day session in June. We expect that the exchange will not be business as usual and that there will be fruitful discussion and decisions made.

The holding of the PBC's annual session back-to-back with the annual stakeholders' meeting of the PBF will generate opportunities for enhancing relations and synergy between the work of the Commission and the Fund. We are pleased that the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722) shows a significant increase for 2013, totalling $86.7 million allocated to 14 countries, with an emphasis on the six PBC-agenda countries. Regarding the launching of a global review, we would like to underline the importance of close consultation with all the relevant stakeholders in drafting the next business plan and positioning the Fund effectively for the period 2014 to 2016. We support the PBC's aim of mobilizing replenishment at its next annual stakeholders' meeting, while taking into account the results of the 2013 PBF review.

To conclude, we emphasize the key role played by the PBC Organizational Committee, along with regular intergovernmental dialogues, in providing policy guidance to the PBF in order to enhance its outcomes. For its part, Indonesia will continue to contribute actively to strengthening the work of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

Mrs. Pucarinho (Portugal): I would like to thank the President for convening this meeting on the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/68/729) and the Secretary-General's report on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722). Portugal considers this debate to be particularly pertinent in the context of the upcoming comprehensive 10-year review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture in 2015.

Portugal is fully aligned with the positions presented by Ambassador Mayr-Harting on behalf of the European Union.

I would like to focus on four points. First, we are encouraged by the results of the interaction between the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) and the other relevant United Nations bodies. The strengthened cooperation with those bodies, including the Security Council, should continue and be intensified. That interaction, however, should not assume an overly formal format. Portugal is of the view that the working methods and activities of the PBC and the various country-specific configurations should be standardized as far as possible in order to maximize synergies and increase the predictability of the programme of work and the comparability of future analyses. In that context, we welcome the establishment of a planning and monitoring tool for the work of the PBC.

Secondly, Portugal sees the annual special session, to be launched this year, as an innovative model and important platform for reflection and deepened dialogue on peacebuilding, contributing to greater coordination among the various actors engaged in peacebuilding activities. As we have noted, the discussions in the annual session should focus on integrating the tandem issues of security and development. Those themes should also be considered alongside the political and humanitarian dimensions of peacebuilding, as well as the phases of early recovery. Such an approach should provide the PBC with a more complete and empowering framework for its recommendations and initiatives, enabling them to have a greater impact on the ground. Concerning the details of the June session, it will be important to know as soon as possible the rules of participation, which we believe should be open to interested Member States. Such modalities will help to ensure participation from capitals and a more substantive and rich discussion.

Thirdly, although some of the recommendations made in 2010 remain valid, the scope of the 2015 review of the peacebuilding architecture should be more comprehensive and should establish a link between the architecture and broader thematic discussion and processes, such as the New Deal for Engagement in Fragile States, the Group of Seven Plus and the post-2015 development agenda. The various initiatives planned for 2014 should therefore be important contributions to the 2015 review process, and possibly even to the ongoing process of shaping the post-2015 development agenda. We welcome the possibility of inviting the Chair of the Sierra Leone country-specific configuration to share his thoughts and experiences on the ongoing transitional process to a development-focused United Nations country-team presence, an initiative that would fit into the preparation for the 2015 review. It will be equally important, however, to reflect on the specific cases of the Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau, and to consider the lessons learned and the capacity of the international community in those contexts in order to avoid future repetition of the serious setbacks experienced in those countries.

With regard to the Peacebuilding Fund (PBF), we would like to acknowledge the use of resources from the Immediate Response Facility, amounting to around $5 million, for Guinea-Bissau. That experience is an example of how the PBC can diversify — indeed, has diversified — its framework of action, helping to support a country in its restoration of constitutional order and consolidation of the rule of law.

Finally, we look forward to the results of the independent review of the Peacebuilding Fund requested in 2013, which will be key to establishing the level of funds needed and to guiding their allocation.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): Pakistan associates itself with the statement delivered by the Permanent Representative of Tunisia on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement of Countries.

I would also like to thank Ambassador Drobnjak of Croatia, outgoing Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), and the current Chair, Ambassador Patriota of Brazil, for their statements and their contributions to the work of the Commission. We would also like to place on record our appreciation for the dedicated support provided by the Peacebuilding Support Office for our work.

The report before us (A/68/729) provides a useful overview of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission during its seventh session. It also recommends an actionable agenda going forward. Pakistan supports the report's focus on the three key functions — advocacy and sustained attention, resource mobilization and forging coherence. As we prepare for the first annual special session of the Commission, to be held in June, and in the run-up to the comprehensive review of the peacebuilding architecture in 2015, today's discussion provides a good opportunity for taking stock, and I would like to make a few points in that regard.

It is clear that there is growing consensus around the concept of peacebuilding as a catalyst for sustainable peace and development in conflict and post-conflict situations. Consequently, the rationale for the Peacebuilding Commission remains valid and strong. The question is whether we have exploited the full potential of this unique body. The composition and objectives of the Commission constitute recognition of the fact that peacebuilding is a complex exercise, involving political, security, humanitarian and development dimensions, and that a broader representation and involvement of actors and stakeholders is required to pursue the desired comprehensive approach. That is the context in which we can evaluate results and impacts and assess how the Commission has approached and carried out its core functions in assisting the countries on its agenda.

Peacebuilding is not only a long-term and complex task, it is also an expensive one. It requires resources both human and financial. The failure to provide adequate resources at the right time may jeopardize an entire effort. The general sense is that expectations with regard to the marshalling of external resources have not been met, for various reasons. On the other hand, the mobilization of internal resources does not seem to have attracted the necessary attention. That aspect is crucial if we are to succeed in making peace sustainable and enabling the countries concerned to stand on their own feet. It may be right to say that resource mobilization is not fund-raising per se in the context of the PBC; besides, countries rich in natural resources could actually have more than what they might expect to receive from the Peacebuilding Fund and other mechanisms. In such cases, the Commission's added value lies in supporting the formulation of national resource mobilization strategies and helping to strengthen institutions in order to pursue those strategies. On the whole, the PBC's engagement should be in creating strategies for resource mobilization in its various dimensions in line with the specific requirements of the countries concerned. We must do better in aligning funding streams with national peacebuilding priorities. Funding mechanisms that are more flexible and better directed towards peace and security objectives would definitely help. The fact that many of the Peacebuilding Commission members are also major donors should facilitate those goals.

It is also important to see peacebuilding in a continuum, from conflict prevention to peacekeeping to post-conflict situations. Multidimensional peacekeeping missions, wherever they are deployed, implement critical peacebuilding tasks into their integrated mandates. There the peacekeepers, as early peacebuilders, help lay the foundations for durable peace. Today the bulk of peacekeeping resources are deployed in multidimensional missions; hence the need to make them even more effective. Resolution 2086 (2013), adopted during Pakistan's presidency of the Security Council in January of last year, was a landmark in that regard. It reinforced the strategic attention to peacekeeping and peacebuilding that has been mentioned by other delegations today. As the leading troop-contributing country and a member of the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission, Pakistan is proud to have contributed to that effort.

The essence of forging coherence among the various actors, including the members of the Peacebuilding Commission, is to channel attention and resources to nationally identified priorities. There is also room to enhance synergy and coordination among the various

mechanisms within the Commission, including the country-specific configurations and the Organizational Committee. We should launch concerted, collective efforts and institutional actions to maximize the potential of all the relevant actors around the table and on the ground. Given that the PBC was created primarily as an advisory body, we should also examine how that advisory role can be made more relevant vis-à-vis the Security Council, on peace and security issues, and the General Assembly, on the larger development and peacebuilding issues. As other speakers have noted, significant progress has been achieved in recent years, of which Sierra Leone is a classic example. However, considerable challenges remain in the peacebuilding arena. Some recent setbacks in other situations have shown that the risk of relapse is real and that more must be done to address the root causes.

Last but not least, our work at the Commission and the forthcoming review should be guided by the positions and feedback of the countries on the agenda, and we would have liked to benefit from that aspect during this debate, too. As compared to the Security Council, the major advantage of the Peacebuilding Commission lies in its ability to directly engage the countries concerned in all stages of its work. Fully exploiting that advantage is the key to success, for effective peacebuilding results essentially from genuine national ownership and committed international partnership. In the final analysis, the PBC's success is to be gauged from the tangible results on the ground and the improvement in the lives of the ordinary people affected by conflict. That should continue to be the yardstick as we work to advance the peacebuilding agenda and together strengthen the peacebuilding architecture.

Mr. Munford (United Kingdom): I thank the President for having convened this annual meeting. I wold also like to thank the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission for his briefing, and the Secretariat for having prepared the report (A/68/729).

The year 2013 represented a mixed year for United Nations peacebuilding. In parallel to today's meeting, the Security Council is discussing an important milestone as it closes down the United Nations mission to Sierra Leone. The people of Sierra Leone have worked hard to stabilize their country. Although they still face many challenges, they are now on the path to a brighter future.

The United Nations should be proud of the central role that it has played in helping Sierra Leone recover from its devastating civil war. It is an example of how effective, tailored and well-planned United Nations peacebuilding interventions can improve people's lives. It demonstrates the impact that the Peacebuilding Commission can have alongside a United Nations mission.

The experiences of 15 years of United Nations peacebuilding in Sierra Leone have taught us that strong national ownership of inclusive peacebuilding processes and a focus on building national institutions are essential to securing a sustainable peace. However, recent relapses into conflict in the Central African Republic and South Sudan demonstrate that we must constantly review and improve our approaches to peacebuilding. Peacebuilding is becoming more complex and challenging for the United Nations as new drivers of conflict emerge, such as organized crime, drug trafficking and the illicit trade in natural resources. We must rise to those new challenges.

The Peacebuilding Commission has had some successes in responding to those changes. I have mentioned Sierra Leone. In Burundi, the Commission has provided valuable political accompaniment, advising the Security Council and United Nations country team on how to navigate political developments. We look forward to the Commission continuing that work in Burundi in 2014 and beyond.

Similarly, the Peacebuilding Fund was a major driver of success in 2013. Targeted support to Yemen, Sierra Leone and Somalia has helped to underpin fragile political processes with robust and concreted activities. The United Kingdom remains a firm supporter of the Fund and will continue its significant contribution in 2014. We urge others to do the same.

Finally, I would say a word about the 2015 review. The United Kingdom believes that the review should not focus solely on the institutions established in 2005 but that it should consider the effectiveness of all United Nations activities on peacebuilding and the contributions made by all United Nations operational peacebuilding arms, including the Secretariat and agencies, funds and programmes in recent years. Since 2005, peacebuilding has moved on and is now much more mainstreamed into the day-to-day work of many parts of the system. We look forward to productive discussions among Member States in the months ahead as we advance our collective goal of a more effective andf efficient United Nations.

Mr. Versegi (Austalia): I would like to thank Ambassador Drobnjak and Ambassador Patriota for their statements this morning. Australia welcomes this year's annual General Assembly debate on the reports of the Peacebuilding Commission (A/68/729) and the Peacebuilding Fund (A/68/722). The work of the Commission and the performance of the Fund are fundamental to building sustainable peace in post-conflict countries.

As one of the first countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), Sierra Leone stands as an important example of successful post-conflict recovery and peacebuilding. With the completion of the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone next week, Sierra Leone's focus will shift from consolidating peace to spurring economic development. In that endeavour, Sierra Leone will have the full support of the international community and the United Nations agencies on the ground. As a member of the PBC's Sierra Leone configuration, Australia welcomes the fact that, for the first time since its establishment, the PBC is scaling down its engagement in one of its agenda countries. That reflects the extraordinary progress that the people and Government of Sierra Leone have made since the end of the civil war.

Australia also welcomes the eligibility of Papua New Guinea for Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) support, which will focus on peacebuilding priorities in Bougainville. With the referendum on Bougainville's future political status due to be held between 2015 and 2020, the next few years will be crucial to consolidating the peacebuilding process. Australia is committed to encouraging and supporting all parties to work towards the full and timely implementation of the Bougainville Peace Agreement. We look forward to continuing our work with United Nations actors to ensure that our support is targeted and effective.

As we approach the 10-year review of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture, it is timely for us to take stock of progress and to look at how we can make that architecture more effective. Australia welcomes the efforts undertaken by the PBC to implement the recommendations of the 2010 review, particularly with respect to improving its working methods. We are encouraged by plans to convene an annual session of the PBC, beginning this year, to enable closer interaction among the relevant stakeholders in New York, in capitals and in the field. That should help to streamline the PBC's working methods and to strengthen the relevance and coherence of the PBC's work in the field.

A key issue for the 2015 review will be the evolving relationship of the PBC with the three principal organs of the United Nations, namely, the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. Of critical importance is the need to reinforce links between the PBC and the Security Council. It is fundamental that that relationship be as effective and cooperative as possible. As a non-permanent member of the Council, Australia strongly supports both formal and informal interactions between the two bodies. Council members can learn much from the advice of the PBC's country-specific configurations, whether those countries are facing a relapse into conflict or entering a period of transition. We have said previously that the PBC can usefully act as an early-warning mechanism for the Council. Its engagement with local stakeholders gives it strong insights into developments on the ground. The PBC should continue to focus on articulating the scope of its advisory role in country-specific contexts to determine how best to add value to the Council's work. In that regard, we welcome the PBC's initiative to develop key objectives and milestones for each of the countries on its agenda in 2014.

Australia also recognizes the long-standing peacebuilding work of United Nations country teams and United Nations agencies in the field. They have existed for much longer than the PBC, and we must remember that they have significant experience and knowledge to share. PBC country-specific configurations should engage in more regular interactions with United Nations agencies in order to ensure cohesion between the various peacebuilding processes and activities taking place in those countries. The Liberia configuration stands out as a good example of that, where configuration members are regularly invited to meetings and videoconferences with key actors, from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)to the World Bank, to discuss the work that they are doing on the ground.

The PBC has a significant comparative advantage in serving as a bridge between Governments and United Nations actors, both in the field and in New York. Australia encourages the PBC to do more to leverage the engagement of regional and subregional stakeholders in order to fully realize its mandated advocacy and political accompaniment role. By strengthening its engagement with the relevant regional entities, such as the Economic Community of West African States,

the Mano River Union and the Economic Community of Central African States, the PBC can contribute to building a common and shared vision of peacebuilding in a regional context.

Finally, on the vital issue of women's participation in peacebuilding, Australia welcomes the continued efforts of the Peacebuilding Support Office and all United Nations implementing agencies to meet the Secretary-General's target of 15 per cent of PBF funding for projects focused on gender equality. While it is disappointing that only 7.4 per cent of funding met that target in 2013 — a reduction on the 2012 figure of 10.8 per cent — we are heartened by the primacy that gender and women's empowerment is receiving in the PBF guidelines, as well as by the launch of a new training programme in partnership with UN-Women. Australia encourages the PBC to continue its efforts to integrate a gender dimension throughout its work. We welcome all efforts to consider economic revitalization and national reconciliation through a gender lens, as key United Nations agencies such as UNDP are doing, and we are strongly supportive of the PBC's partnership with UN-Women. Such a partnership is critical to raising awareness of the transformative role of women in post-conflict societies.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.